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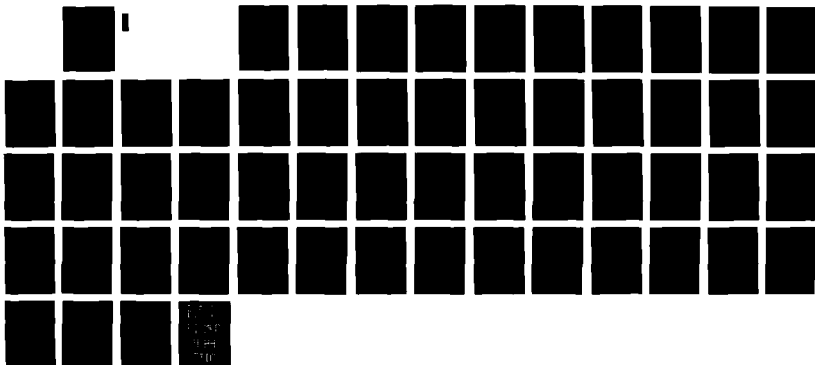
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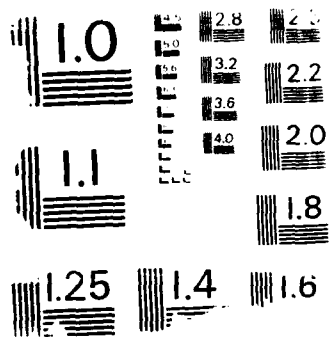
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→ In view of the dramatic changes within the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev, NATO faces the challenge of coordinating its defense planning with its diplomatic approaches to the Soviet Union. This Note considers issues fundamental to NATO's strategic policy: what goals NATO should pursue in the years ahead, if containment and deterrence are less predominant concerns; what its priorities should be among competing political, economic, and diplomatic policies; how it should approach arms control negotiations; what its defense policy and military strategy should be; what force improvement measures it should pursue; and what its stance toward coalition planning and transatlantic relations should be. Finally, it considers the U.S. role in this context, and concludes that the United States must continue its involvement in NATO and European security affairs. *Kearney: Foreign*

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A RAND NOTE

N-2871-OSD

**Moscow's Spring or NATO's Autumn:
U.S. Policy and the Future of Europe**

Richard L. Kugler

May 1989

**Prepared for
The Office of the Secretary of Defense**

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PREFACE

As NATO enters its fourth decade, the United States and its allies face major challenges in shaping alliance security policy for the 1990s and beyond. In particular, NATO faces the difficult task of coordinating its defense planning with its diplomatic approaches to the Soviet Union. This Note addresses these issues and develops an overall policy that might help NATO deal with the uncertain times ahead.

Research and analysis for this Note was conducted as part of a book on NATO's conventional defenses being written by Richard L. Kugler, a RAND Senior Social Scientist, under sponsorship by the Ford Foundation and The RAND Corporation. Publication of this Note was conducted using research support funds from RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a Federally Funded Research and Development Center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

SUMMARY

On the eve of World War I, British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey remarked that "the lamps are going out all over Europe and we shall not see them relit again in our lifetimes." Whether the lamps are now coming back on again, as some hope, is a matter of conjecture. But there can be little doubt that the game is afoot today in Europe. The rigidities of the Cold War are giving way to a new, more fluid security politics and a relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact that is vastly more complicated than before. Equally important, Europe has moved back to center stage in modern international politics. The grand prize of the partly cooperative, partly competitive process of change now underway is control of the destiny of this globally important continent well into the next century. This is a game that the United States and its allies cannot afford to lose.

At the center of the rapid changes now taking place lies a suddenly energetic Soviet Union under the direction of its dynamic leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. That the Soviet Union is pursuing a more activist diplomacy in Europe today, compared with the situation a decade ago, is beyond question. What is not clear is whether the goals Gorbachev and his nation are pursuing are benign, malevolent, or some combination of the two. Thus the years ahead might offer either opportunity or danger, or both at once. NATO is hard pressed to sort out which is the case and what will be the shape of things to come.

In the face of this ambiguity, the United States and NATO must craft an intelligent and discriminating policy that will enable them to shape Europe's destiny rather than be victimized by it. But in contrast to past years when NATO's policy could be based largely on the comfortingly simple notions of containment and deterrence, the alliance must now engage in a delicate balancing act of encouraging Moscow's spring while not bringing about NATO's autumn. This will compel NATO to pursue a more complex, finely tuned, and perhaps controversial policy than anytime in the past: one attuned to the years ahead rather than

the times behind. It will require new departures in diplomacy, economic relations, negotiatory policy, and defense preparedness. But more fundamentally, it also will require adoption of a different psychology about managing European security affairs that blends together the West's often competing instincts to seek change and to preserve stability.

This study examines the issues and alternatives shaping NATO's policy for the future. Beyond this, it presents the outlines of how a policy that responds to the challenges ahead might be constructed, one that the United States can use as it sets about to guide the alliance into the 1990s. The goal of this policy is to forge NATO's separate endeavors into a coherent whole. Above all, it aims at establishing a mutually supporting relationship between NATO's diplomacy toward the Soviet Union and its defense planning, a key to NATO's well-being in the decades ahead.

This policy is based on the assumption that notwithstanding the growing importance of Asia and other regions and for a host of geostrategic and economic reasons, Europe will remain vitally important to the United States for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, this policy rejects the following contemporary arguments in favor of disengagement: that the Soviet threat has receded, that the allies should handle the burdens alone, and that American priorities lie elsewhere. This policy postulates instead that the United States should retain a large military presence in Europe and should adopt a stance of steady, constructive involvement in both transatlantic relations and East-West affairs.

This policy also adopts the core assumption that NATO should base its assessment of Soviet intentions not only on Gorbachev's lofty rhetoric, but also on the specific goals he seems to be pursuing and the concrete actions that he is taking. A clear-eyed reading of his behavior in these areas leads to the sobering but prudent conclusion that although NATO should respond forthcomingly to his overtures, it also should anchor itself on realistic expectations for Europe's future. The prospects for achieving better, more stable relations with the Soviets are as real as their exact dimensions are uncertain. But the Soviet Union still is likely to remain a well-armed adversary power

seeking to gain strategic advantage in Europe over the United States and NATO. Accordingly, the United States and its allies should strongly emphasize both bolstering NATO's unity and dealing forthcomingly with Moscow, rather than neglecting the former while pursuing the latter.

This policy recommends that NATO should actively pursue diplomatic, economic, and related measures to improve relations with the Soviets. But simultaneously it should take care to ensure that its gestures do not, in the process, unravel its own unity and compromise its security. With this in mind, NATO should adopt a tough-minded stance in arms control negotiations, including the upcoming Conventional Stability Talks. It should firmly pursue the goal of military security in these negotiations and resist the temptation to use them as an exploratory vehicle for fostering political change in Europe. In addition, NATO must take care to ensure that its defenses remain intact in the years ahead; above all, it should avoid any unilateral steps that might prematurely dismantle them on the basis of as yet unfulfilled hopes.

Beyond simply preserving NATO's present defenses, this policy contends that the United States and its allies should take important steps to further strengthen and better configure them to meet future challenges. It calls for the alliance to pursue three broad defense priorities in the next few years: reaffirmation of NATO's military strategy of flexible response (MC 14/3), theater nuclear modernization at acceptable political costs, and conventional improvements at affordable fiscal cost. These measures together would enable the alliance to erect the kind of strong, balanced defense posture that its security interests will demand. Because progress in all three areas is necessary, the alliance will need to establish appropriate priorities. In particular, it will need to ensure that the tendency to become preoccupied with nuclear issues does not lead NATO to overlook its conventional defense requirements.

Provided NATO pursues a properly balanced set of priorities, it potentially can achieve all three of these key defense goals. But major progress will be possible only if NATO also maintains its unity and, beyond this, actually strengthens its capacity to cooperate together. For this reason, this policy envisions something quite different than

the steady erosion of transatlantic relations and the emergence of an independent Western European pillar that many believe is inevitable and even desirable. It calls instead for increased coalition planning and alliance military integration and closer U.S.-Western European relations than in the past. Only by pursuing this difficult but important course can NATO hope both to protect its security and take full advantage of whatever real opportunity Gorbachev might be offering the West to relight the lamps of Europe.

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I. THE SETTING: EUROPE TODAY

If Charles Dickens were alive today, he might describe current European security affairs in the same immortal words with which he began *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." If so, he would capture Europe's essence now just as he did then. Although today's situation differs vastly from that of the 1790s, it presents, in its own way, a potent amalgam of the best and worst. The NATO alliance is solid but troubled. Deterrence is intact, but NATO's conventional defenses are vulnerable. Relations with the Soviet Union are improving but are still adversarial. Negotiations are making progress but Europe remains an armed camp. No crises are brewing but disaster is still possible. As in the 1790s, these forces are competing to control Europe's destiny, and the outcome is equally unclear.

It is precisely this complexity, magnified by ambiguity in Soviet intentions, that has given rise to such diverse expectations about NATO's future. Although several different forecasts have sprouted up, two illustrate the wide range of opinion now existing. The first, optimistic about the trends and believing that a revolution is underway in Soviet policy, holds that healthy changes will occur over the next decade. The second forecast is more pessimistic. Skeptical of Soviet claims, it believes that the East-West conflict is firmly rooted. It predicts continued rivalry with the Soviet Union in a setting that, if the alliance is not careful, instead might unravel NATO and send Europe on a downward spiral. Only time will tell which forecast is the more accurate; all that can be said now is that, to paraphrase Dickens, Europe might be going to heaven, or in the other direction, but it is hard to know which.

This uncertainty about Europe's future and how to prepare for it is responsible for the extraordinary mixture of hope and caution that is now sweeping the NATO alliance. It also is responsible for the debate that is mounting over NATO's strategic policy. As all participants recognize, the United States and its allies cannot allow events to take

their own course. They must develop a joint and proactive approach that will enable them to shape Europe's destiny rather than being passive witnesses, and possibly victims, to its evolution. But the challenge facing them is more complex than in past years when Soviet hostility was a constant and NATO only had to decide how to contain it. To be sure, the alliance still must act prudently to protect its security. But now it also must engage its traditional adversary in a process of change in Europe, a process aimed at fostering stability but capable of producing the opposite. To put matters mildly, the alliance is undecided on how best to meet this challenge.

At issue here are the very fundamentals of NATO's strategic policy. If containment and deterrence are to be less singularly predominant, then what goals should NATO pursue in the years ahead? What are to be its priorities among competing political, economic, and diplomatic policies? How should it approach arms control negotiations? What should be its defense policy and military strategy? What force improvement measures should it pursue, and at what price? And what should be its stance toward coalition planning and transatlantic relations? This Note cannot hope to give definitive answers to all of these questions, but it does aspire to create a frame of reference for broadly examining them. Based on the assumption that the task facing the alliance in the years ahead will be to encourage Moscow's spring while not triggering NATO's autumn, it articulates the broad outlines of a U.S. and NATO strategic policy for the future. With respect to both transatlantic and East-West relations, this policy calls for an active, steady, and constructive American involvement in Europe's affairs.

II. WHITHER THE SOVIET UNION?

In developing its strategic policy for the 1990s, the alliance must, as a first principle, come to grips with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. Evidently the old paradigm, wherein the USSR was regarded as an implacable enemy, no longer is applicable. But what new paradigm should take its place? Where is the Soviet Union headed? Equally important, what expectations about future Soviet policy should the West adopt to guide its own planning? If the West's old estimates are no longer appropriate, what are to be the new ones?

Although these questions might well be unanswerable in some final sense, the West nonetheless needs to address them with sufficient specificity to determine NATO's future policy. In doing so, the alliance must take care to avoid the extremes of false euphoria and undue pessimism that so often have damaged its appraisals of Soviet conduct in the past. Particularly in light of the new security conditions emerging in Europe, it needs to judge Soviet policy as soberly and accurately as possible. To do so, it needs to peer behind the veil of Gorbachev's inspiring rhetoric and to examine the specific details of the goals and actions that the Soviet government is pursuing under him.

With this in mind, let us turn first to Soviet domestic developments and internal reform. Here, glasnost and perestroika have initiated a widespread and potentially far-reaching process of economic restructuring and, to some extent, political democratization. In a brief period, the Soviet system has changed to a degree that only a short while ago was almost unimaginable. As the energetic and experiment-minded Gorbachev leads his nation toward a more humane and presumably more economically productive era, further changes doubtless will come. The old Soviet order thus has become a creature of the past and is steadily giving way to something far more appealing.

To avoid becoming captured by false hopes, however, it is important to remember that there are definite limits on how far Gorbachev intends to go. His vision of a more open, productive country stops well short of a democratic polity and market economy. In his eyes, the Communist Party is still to remain politically dominant, and its socialist ideology is to continue providing the nation's core values. The economy is to remain largely under central command. Despite ongoing reforms in the agricultural and industrial sectors, private property is not being adopted; nor are free market forces on the verge of being given open license. The reforms adopted at the July 1988 Party Conference transfer some authority to state organs and establish some new democratic electoral mechanisms, but they do not fundamentally alter the present system. Nor does Gorbachev's purge of the Politburo, streamlining of the Party, and assumption of the Soviet Presidency signal a commitment to democracy. Indeed, it might mark a return to one-man rule rather than a purging of the foes of pluralism and reform.

Beyond this, Gorbachev's vision is not necessarily the blueprint for the future. His position currently seems secure but his future is uncertain. Despite his consolidation of power at the Central Committee meeting in October 1988, perestroika and glasnost are still controversial in the Soviet Union. Powerful party traditionalists, fearing their own loss of status and doubtless worried that small reforms will trigger uncontrollable ones later, particularly remain skeptical. They will no doubt continue exerting a braking effect on perestroika, and their influence is likely to rise if the reform process shows signs of spinning out of control.

For example, the growing nationalist movement in the Soviet Baltic Republics, which has been encouraged by glasnost, is the kind of potentially destabilizing development that could lead the Soviet leadership to pull in its horns. The core problem is that in a totalitarian regime the reform process is difficult to keep within bounds. Its natural tendency is to gather momentum and eventually to threaten the regime itself. Moreover, destabilizing trends within the USSR are likely to spawn offshoots in the East European nations, and

vice versa. These very real concerns are likely to exert a tempering influence not only on Party traditionalists but also, as suggested by his November 1988 speech attacking domestic disorder, on Gorbachev himself.

The outcome of the mounting struggle between reform and tradition remains to be determined. But the trends thus far suggest that, barring revolution, the future Soviet Union, although unlike the old one, will still be vastly different from the liberal democracies it confronts in West Europe. History certainly supports this judgment. Moscow previously has had whiffs of spring without democracy blooming: The early Lenin-Trotsky era and even the Khrushchev era are examples. Since 1917 the Soviets have been struggling continually over how power should be allocated between the Party and the State, and whether control should be centralized or decentralized. Many organizational and procedural changes have been implemented along the way. The present debate over perestroika thus has a longer history than many westerners realize.

Gorbachev's departures, of course, are sui generis. Undeniably he is nudging the nation out of its past rigidity. But precisely where the USSR is headed is an open question. If something resembling democracy is the outcome, it will be due to unforeseen forces beyond his control, forces that are unlikely to be unleashed precisely because of their uncertain but risky consequences. When events have run their course, from what can be determined now, the Soviet Union probably will wind up having mutated from a totalitarian state into something resembling an authoritarian nation. This is an important change in absolute terms, but along the spectrum of political regimes, an authoritarian system is hardly democracy.

To NATO, the USSR's debates over its internal order are less important than the implications for its foreign policy. Largely in reaction to Gorbachev's rhetoric, many in the West hope that internal reform will give birth to a benign diplomacy. But whether this will be the case remains unclear. For the moment, Gorbachev needs cooperative relations with the West to pursue his internal agenda, but that may be largely a tactical, perhaps momentary need. What matters here are traits that will endure.

In this regard, any nation's internal order, to some degree, conditions its diplomacy. The USSR's reforms consequently augur well: Other things equal, a more pluralistic Soviet Union is likely to be less hostile to the West. But a minor shift is one thing, a major one quite another. If the USSR's internal evolution does turn out to be limited, it is not likely to bring about a fundamental revolution in Moscow's diplomacy. Even after reform, the Soviet Union is unlikely to pursue friendship with the West solely because of any shared outlook on domestic political values. This does not exclude the emergence of common security goals based on external conditions. But insofar as domestic order affects foreign policy, the remaining incompatibilities are probably large enough that the Soviets will continue regarding the West with a large dose of distaste and suspicion. Indeed, a turn for the worse may be as likely as a marked turn for the better. In this event, the West might find itself facing the emergence of the USSR as a stronger, more energetic, and still adversarial power.

Nor are the Soviets likely to be driven into the West's arms by economic dependency. The USSR, its economy badly in the doldrums and in need of revitalization, clearly wants to establish better trade relations and to gain access to Western technology, goods, and credits in order to tide perestroika over the lean years. But thus far, it has sought improved economic relations primarily on its own terms. It has refused to participate in any form of linkage politics whereby it would make strategic concessions in return for western economic help. The controlling factor here is that the USSR's problem is largely managerial and institutional: It already possesses most of the resources needed to build its economy. The Soviets prefer to receive western help and might, in the years ahead, prove willing to make some concessions to get it (e.g., easing of immigration restrictions). But they seemingly do not need it to the point where their dependency gives the West much leverage on strategic issues.

These sobering realities do not mean that prospects for better East-West relations are hopeless. They simply mean that present trends inside the Soviet Union do not guarantee better relations. Moscow's

future diplomacy will be shaped by how Gorbachev and his successors assess the USSR's geostrategic situation. Maybe they will make the same choices as their predecessors, and maybe not.

In this regard, perhaps the Soviet Union finally has come under the control of a far-sighted statesman who not only intends to modernize the USSR but also is aware that Europe's tangled mess has contributed heavily to the Soviet Union's retarded development over the past four decades. This at least is what is suggested by Gorbachev's rhetoric about ending the Cold War, which must be taken seriously for the simple reason that not even Soviet political leaders are free to publicly endorse goals that they privately discount. What is less clear is whether, and how far, this impulse will carry him toward reaching an actual accommodation on the issues still dividing the East and the West.

Present trends suggest that, at a minimum, the Soviets will probably be preoccupied with their internal agenda over the next several years. They are therefore unlikely to pursue expansionist policies of the sort that would bring them into confrontation with the West. This applies not only to Europe, but elsewhere: Their withdrawal from Afghanistan and their interest in ending conflicts in Angola, Southeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf suggest a policy of stabilizing Third World tensions. Whether they will actually retrench their long-established and strategically vital presence in Europe, however, is another matter.

A key to Europe's future is whether the Soviets will be willing to relax their stranglehold over their Eastern European allies. An encouraging development is that Gorbachev has been prodding hesitant allied regimes to emulate perestroika and glasnost. But his goals for them, like his vision for the USSR, have decided limits: All these nations are to remain under socialist rule. In Poland, he is supporting Jarulzelski's government, which, despite introducing some reforms, has shied away from major changes. In Hungary, he has supported Karoly Grosz's innovative regime. But even here, as Grosz acknowledges, democratization is to take place only within a one-party system. In Czechoslovakia, he has supported liberalization, but he has stopped well short of encouraging the kind of changes that occurred during Prague's spring. In the GDR, he has not interfered with the regime's reluctance to experiment.

As a reassuring gesture, Gorbachev has stated publicly that as part of his program to stabilize Europe, the Warsaw Pact can be allowed to wither as an institution as long as NATO pursues the same course. Whether this idea is anything more than a hollow public relations ploy is uncertain: It would amount to a major reversal of direction for the Soviets, who lately have been pursuing precisely the opposite course by tightening their control over the Warsaw Pact's command structure. But its implications need to be considered seriously, if only to point out the difference between the surface appeal of such ideas and their uneven practical consequences.

By dismantling the alliance military structures on both sides, this step would return Europe to the days of the late 1940s when neither side possessed an integrated alliance military system. At first glance, it appears to treat both sides fairly. But closer inspection reveals that it would operate decidedly to the West's disadvantage by leaving it no formal mechanism to coordinate the activities of its individual members. The Soviets meanwhile would still retain ample mechanisms for controlling Eastern Europe even without the Pact's formal structure. Stalin, for example, had little difficulty orchestrating events there in the absence of an integrated command. A determined Gorbachev presumably could do likewise.

What matters more than institutional structures is the basic political relationship between the USSR and the East European nations. Moscow's official statements to date suggest a vision in which these nations will continue to host large Soviet forces and stay well within the Soviet bloc. Evidently the Soviets do not intend to part with hegemony over East Europe or even allow these nations latitude in their diplomacy. This is a step that will be necessary before NATO can relax its concern about Soviet ambitions in Europe and begin re-thinking NATO's role.

With respect to Western Europe, Gorbachev has said that an era of warmer relations is an essential feature of perestroika and glasnost. To this end, he embarked in early 1986 on an active diplomatic campaign to establish a bilateral dialogue not only with the United States, but

also with the United Kingdom, West Germany, France, and other NATO nations. Over the succeeding two years, his efforts led to a series of high-level official visits and agreements with several western countries to expand economic, cultural, scientific, and educational ties. The practical effects of these agreements are being increasingly felt in Europe and are creating the impression that an era of stable relations has, in fact, arrived.

Despite this flurry of diplomatic activity, Gorbachev's specific vision of the new European order does not square well with NATO's traditional notions of its security needs. He repeatedly has stressed Moscow's longstanding theme that the Soviet Union is a European power while the United States should stay where it belongs: across the Atlantic. In encouraging the West European nations to adjust to this geostrategic reality, he has urged them to acquire a stronger European identity. But evidently this does not imply a European defense pillar midway between Moscow and the United States. Instead, it seems to mean greater cooperation with the Soviet Union against a backdrop of U.S. nuclear disengagement and weaker NATO defenses. To some, this vision, often labeled "Europe's Common House" by Eastern spokesmen, might offer comforting relief from the turbulent past. But to others, it looks suspiciously like old wine in new bottles.

A sober appraisal of the evidence thus suggests that despite his visionary rhetoric, Gorbachev has not yet made corresponding changes in the all-important details of Soviet diplomacy in Europe. To be fair, this alone does not rule out future change, when the time is ripe. It is this allure of future departures, rather than actual progress to date, that primarily is responsible for his popularity in Europe. But for the moment, the best that can be said is that his diplomacy has taken on the aura of the Mona Lisa. Like Leonardo's masterpiece, it can be interpreted many ways, depending on the observer's instincts.

Given this ambiguity, Moscow's attitude toward the European military balance becomes a litmus test of its real foreign policy goals. In this area, history shows that the Soviets have long relied on military power to underwrite their foreign policy. The forward positioning of large forces in Eastern Europe has played a central role

in this calculus by protecting the USSR's borders, controlling the Eastern European nations, and deterring attack by NATO. It also has been employed to help Moscow pursue outright offensive aims against West Europe, such as insurance against a German resurgence, influence over NATO's nations, and the means to invade, if necessary.

Perhaps the Soviets truly have come to recognize that while their force presence has enabled them to control Eastern Europe successfully, it has done more to undermine, rather than help, their goals in Western Europe. A major move in disarmament's direction nonetheless would require the Soviets not only to depart from their traditional approach, but also to repudiate the hugely expensive military buildup that they have been pursuing for many years to reach their present position. They have not often shown themselves prone to such sweeping changes, especially overnight.

Although Gorbachev has shown no interest in major disarmament, he has articulated an entirely new doctrine of "reasonable sufficiency," with an avowedly defensive focus, to govern future Soviet planning. This concept has resonated well in the West, where a "defensive" outlook is taken as a sign of peaceful intent. But as recent talks between U.S. and Soviet defense experts have shown, military doctrine, like beauty, lies in the eyes of the beholder. Historically, the Soviets always have claimed that their military strategy is defensive, even while fielding forces that, by Western standards, amply meet the requirements of an offensive strategy. The issue therefore is not rhetorical policy, but whether the Soviets are willing to pare back their currently large forces and capabilities to the point where they do not pose a clear threat to the West in NATO's eyes.

The INF Treaty clearly is a step in the right direction. The Soviets not only agreed to asymmetric reductions favoring NATO, but also to a treaty in which their offensive capability is pared back while NATO is allowed to retain a posture that it regards as adequate for defense. At the same time, it is important to remember, the Soviets attained pragmatic goals of their own. They induced NATO to dismantle its Pershing II and GLCM missiles, which were highly threatening to Soviet strategy and an important glue in NATO's cohesion. They also achieved

these gains without making crippling sacrifices in their military posture: Their remaining ICBM missile, bomber, and tactical nuclear forces are easily adequate to destroy all plausible targets in Europe. Hence, the INF Treaty can be interpreted two ways and is not itself proof that the Soviets are genuinely pursuing comprehensive arms control goals in Europe.

A similar set of ambiguities surrounds the unilateral cuts in conventional forces that Gorbachev has initiated. About a year ago, evidence started becoming available that the Soviets were paring back military operations in Mongolia and overseas naval deployments, and that they intended to dismantle some units being withdrawn from Afghanistan. Shortly thereafter, rumors began to circulate that the Soviets were contemplating removal of their four divisions in Hungary. Soviet officials quickly debunked this rumor, and the July 1988 meeting of Warsaw Pact political leaders passed without mentioning that issue. At that same time, Soviet Marshall Akhromeyev said that unilateral troop cuts were not being considered and that rather than removing forces, the USSR would implement its new defensive doctrine by altering troop training, exercises, and structure. Acknowledging criticism that the Soviets have not yet begun moving in this direction, he said that these changes would take years to implement.

Akhromeyev's remarks seemed to lay the matter of unilateral cuts in Europe to rest. But Gorbachev changed this when, in his December 1988 address at the United Nations, he stunningly announced his intention to undertake fairly sizable cuts in Europe over the coming two years. His plan includes withdrawal of six tank divisions, 5000 tanks, some specialized equipment, and 50,000 personnel from Soviet forces in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. In addition, 5000 tanks are to be removed from Soviet forces elsewhere in the "Atlantic-to-the-Urals" area while a total of 500,000 personnel are to be dropped from the active posture. Several hundred combat aircraft also are to be deactivated.

The motives behind this important departure, which not only caught the West by surprise but also evidently was opposed by senior Soviet military officials, are both complex and unclear. Gorbachev himself has claimed that these cutbacks reflect a conscious effort on Moscow's part

to put the new defensive doctrine into place, to reconfigure Soviet forces into a less threatening mode, and to spur the arms control process in Europe. Beyond doubt, Gorbachev also is moving in this direction partially for economic reasons. A cutback in defense spending will help generate money for badly needed economic investment. Additionally, as some skeptical western experts contend, he might be hoping to stampede the West into making damaging military cutbacks of its own.

Regardless of Gorbachev's reasons, a core issue is whether these cutbacks will alter the military situation in Europe to the extent that the Warsaw Pact threat to NATO is appreciably reduced. These reductions, although undeniably large in an absolute sense, will have a less profound effect in a relative sense because the Warsaw Pact's forces are so large that they could absorb sizable cuts and still remain a leviathan, especially compared with NATO.

Specifically, removal of six divisions from the forward areas will reduce the Warsaw Pact's posture there by about 10-15 percent. If these cuts are not offset by qualitative improvements elsewhere--which some experts claim could happen--they will help limit the threat of a surprise attack. But they will not wholly eliminate this threat. Moreover, even after all of Gorbachev's cuts are absorbed, the Warsaw Pact still will be capable of deploying the 80-100 divisions that would be needed to conduct a "fully mobilized" attack against Central Europe after a period of reinforcement. The primary effect of Gorbachev's cuts against this equally dangerous type of attack would be to slow the Warsaw Pact's buildup rate in Central Europe and to constrain the Pact's ability to mount simultaneous operations against the Center Region and the flanks. Although these constraints will help ease NATO's planning dilemmas, they will not render NATO inviolate to a Soviet assault. As the NATO foreign ministers pointed out a few days after Gorbachev's speech, much larger Soviet cuts will be necessary before a fully stable military balance can be reached.

Since further unilateral Soviet cuts appear unlikely, prospects for reaching a truly stable military balance seem to lie primarily in the arena of arms control negotiations. Here, Gorbachev has outlined a

platform that, beyond doubt, is comprehensive. In addition to signing the INF Treaty, he has tabled a START position calling for 50 percent cuts in offensive strategic forces and a lengthy continuation of the ABM Treaty. He also has expressed openness to talks aimed at further cuts in nuclear forces in Europe. Indeed, in early 1986 and again at the Reykjavik summit, he called for the complete elimination of nuclear missiles from the globe.

With respect to the conventional balance, Gorbachev has called for an all-European summit along Reykjavik's lines to solve this problem. Since he did not envision U.S. participation, NATO rejected this demarche as a ploy. But in a more serious vein, he did sign the 1986 Stockholm accords on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs). He also has agreed to enter the new Conventional Stability Talks (CST), which will probably replace the stagnant Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) forum. In expanding MBFR's focus beyond the Center Region, these talks will cover a larger geographic area stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. They will be accompanied by a second round of Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) talks aimed at reaching accord on further CSBMs.

Soviet spokesmen have spoken favorably of a CST agreement in which the Warsaw Pact would take larger cuts than NATO (their willingness to do so, however, probably is now diminished in light of Gorbachev's unilateral drawdowns). Their concept calls for "offensive weapons" to be culled out, defensive zones to be established in the forward areas, and the two sides to reach a common ceiling at substantially lower levels than now. Preparatory meetings are now underway, and these talks will commence soon.

Although these signs are encouraging, the agenda that the Soviets will pursue in these talks is as yet unknown. In the past, they often have tabled attractive proposals that turned out to be unnegotiable propaganda exercises. There is a certain risk that the INF Treaty, like the mid-1950s Soviet withdrawal from Austria, will prove to be an isolated event, and that the Soviets will display no intention of further reducing their military capacity to intimidate the West. Indeed, Moscow's very presence in these talks might yet prove to be more

a ruse to lull NATO asleep than a desire for true accords. If so, the Soviets probably will strive for prolonged negotiations on the MBFR model that, while keeping up proper appearances, lead nowhere. The real adjustments would be made through each side's unilateral force improvements where, the Soviets presumably would hope, their efforts will continue apace while NATO's steadily fall behind.

Partially offsetting this risk is evidence from past experience suggesting that the Soviets have considerable respect for NATO's defense efforts and place value on accords that stabilize the balance. Perhaps Gorbachev will prove willing to undertake a second wave of cuts, on a bilateral basis, required to bring about a balanced situation in Europe. But even if the Soviets intend to bargain seriously, the process of negotiating deep cuts is guaranteed to be arduous. Differences in weapons, force structure, and doctrine alone can pose major barriers to agreement. Negotiations between adversaries normally succeed only when both sides believe that they have improved themselves. This can be difficult to achieve when the subject is military competition, especially with the Soviets, who traditionally have been tough negotiators with a reputation for refusing accords that do not work to their advantage. Whether Gorbachev, in his desire to achieve better relations with the West, will depart from this pattern remains to be seen.

III. NATO'S POLITICAL STRATEGY

Confronted by conflicting signals from Moscow, NATO faces major uncertainty about the Soviet Union's future evolution. Gorbachev's rhetorical visions are inspiring, and the actual changes that he has made undeniably are encouraging. When the details of his policies are examined, however, much in his agenda remains disturbing. Since NATO would be far better off by being pleasantly surprised than disastrously caught off guard, it would be best advised to react to Gorbachev in a hopeful but wary way. Until events prove otherwise, NATO should assume the Soviets will be pursuing a distinctly dual strategy toward the West. This means that they might well pursue an intensified dialogue aimed at reducing the risk of war, stabilizing the military balance, and fostering better relations in areas where it serves their interests. But they also are likely to remain a dangerous adversary power endowed with military strength and competitively seeking to gain strategic advantage over the West.

Europe's future thus offers both opportunity and danger in ample and uncertain amounts. The possibility of cooperating more with the Soviets is real, and East-West relations might well improve markedly in the next few years. But NATO and the Warsaw Pact also are likely to continue competing openly, if peacefully, for control of Europe's destiny. This competition will be influenced heavily by each side's relative military strength in Europe, which will affect such important factors as each alliance's unity, prestige, and ability to shape events. The West thus should hope for the best from Moscow's spring, but it should not expect miracles. The Cold War undeniably is changing and winding down. But whether it has ended is another issue. It will probably be replaced by a twenty-first century mutant that will be neither cold war nor true peace.

Indeed, as an outgrowth of this continuing competition, a future military clash, while highly improbable, is not so unimaginable that it can be dismissed from NATO's defense planning. In judging Europe's

future, one must remember that atmospherics can change overnight and should not be confused with substance. Europe's security system is still structurally unstable; beneath the tranquil surface lie dangerous fault lines that history shows can erupt suddenly. Indeed the process of change now underway, despite its benign appearance, plausibly could precipitate an unexpected downturn in ways that even astute observers cannot now forecast. A war might grow out of a complicated crisis similar to the situation in 1914, perhaps originating outside Europe rather than as naked Soviet aggression. But it is still sufficiently plausible to be taken seriously as a basis for NATO's defense planning.

Fortunately Europe's future will depend not only on what Moscow seeks, but also on the goals that NATO sets for itself. But what are to be NATO's goals? This question particularly needs to be addressed in the United States. For the past 40 years, the United States has concluded that it has vital interests at stake in Europe and has behaved in a correspondingly activist way by leading the alliance in its security planning and defense preparedness. More recently, however, this policy calculus has come under attack in some quarters. In particular, the argument has been made that in a global sense Europe is becoming less centrally important to the United States. This view holds that Europe particularly is being eclipsed by the Pacific Basin, which presumably should start becoming a focal point of U.S. security planning while Europe is allowed to fade into the background.

This argument correctly gauges the strategic trends insofar as it contends that the Pacific Basin has become economically important to the United States. But it falls down in its conclusion that Europe consequently has become less important, especially in military terms. Relative trends aside, Europe is still economically important in absolute terms. It contains the largest concentration of industry, technology, and skilled labor in the world. This is one reason why Europe remains the focal point of the Soviet Union's geostrategy and has long been considered the grand prize, if not always the most intense hot spot on the globe, of the East-West struggle.

Moreover, Europe is still a major and growing trading partner of the United States. Although U.S. trade with Asia has become larger in total volume, U.S. capital investments in Europe (and vice versa) are still greater than with respect to Asia. In essence, Europe remains a critical component of the western international economic order that has evolved since World War II. Its loss to Soviet control would inflict damage not only on U.S.-European trade relations but also on the larger international economic system. Also, Europe shares an important ethnic and cultural heritage with the United States, which weighs heavily in American foreign policy.

It is precisely for these reasons that U.S. policy in the twentieth century has been anchored on the assumption that Europe cannot be allowed to fall under the control of a hostile power. Despite Asia's rise, nothing has happened to change this elementary but still powerful calculus. Additionally, Europe not only is still at least as strategically important as Asia, but it also remains dangerously threatened by a hostile military power. Despite the USSR's military buildup in the Far East, its forces there threaten the West's interests in considerably less direct ways than do its forces in Europe. For this reason, Europe still ranks higher in its claim on American military resources than does Asia. The same situation applies to all other geographical areas: None presents an equivalent combination of vital interests and tangible threats as does Europe today.

The central strategic reality here is that the United States made a far-sighted decision in the late 1940s to commit its resources to collective security in Europe. This commitment remains as wise now as it was then. The past four decades have witnessed enormous success in Europe: the building of economically powerful, stable democracies under the mantle of a defensively minded military strategy. Any U.S. policy that risked a reversal of these trends, by virtue of misplaced global priorities or an overly sensitive reaction to defense burdens that have proven manageable for 40 years, would do both the United States and the western alliance a serious disservice.

Assuming that the United States maintains its present commitment in Europe, how then should NATO deal with Gorbachev? Clearly, the West should not turn a deaf ear to Moscow. By acting in a forthcoming way, it should strive to support those elements of Gorbachev's reforms that genuinely are aimed at bringing peace and stability to Europe. But just as clearly, it cannot afford to neglect its own security interests or ignore the threat that the Soviet Union still poses to them. It thus needs to be both open and resolute, in whatever combination is appropriate to the situation as it emerges in future years.

Judging from official statements to date, these considerations seem likely to lead NATO to pursue a dual strategy of its own, one aimed at safeguarding the alliance's security as its highest priority while trying, within the limits of prudence, to build better relations with the Soviets. Although simple sounding, this strategy in reality is quite complex. It requires NATO to coordinate its many policy activities on behalf of two goals that could work against each other in some cases. Equally important, it requires the alliance to blend together two different, often warring mindsets: the risk-averse conservatism that values stability and the risk-taking liberalism that welcomes change in the hope that it will bring progress.

Despite its complexity, this strategy has much to recommend it simply because it is sound conceptually. Appropriately synoptic, it pursues both security and progress in a balanced way, rather than sacrificing one goal on behalf of the other. It also is appropriately flexible: It allows NATO to approach the future in a step-by-step way and to make periodic adjustments in its stance, as required by the evolving situation. Provided NATO can achieve the balanced policy it demands, it thus seems suited to Europe today. NATO, for all practical purposes, has no other alternative.

This strategy requires highly proficient execution. In its concern for achieving one goal, NATO will be vulnerable to misreading the situation and thus neglecting the other. If it errs seriously in one direction, it could stifle Gorbachev's overtures. If it errs in the other, it could prematurely trigger its own unraveling. To avoid both

failures, NATO will have to attain a degree of precision in executing this strategy that any single nation, much less a large alliance, would be hard pressed to achieve. Precision of this sort may be possible on a chessboard, but it is far less easily achieved in modern international politics.

While the opportunity costs of failing to support Moscow's spring are hard to measure, the dynamics of NATO's autumn and its consequences are easy to comprehend. NATO's overall unity and security are at stake here, but the core concern is West Germany. A traditional target of Moscow's designs, the Federal Republic faces a large Soviet army on its borders and lacks its own independent nuclear deterrent. It thus depends heavily on U.S. and NATO security guarantees, which are manifested most clearly by NATO's military strategy and the presence of large allied forces in Germany.

The primary risk of dealing unwisely with Gorbachev is that the alliance might be led astray, driven by misguided domestic opinion, or victimized by its own bungling into fatally weakening these guarantees in the face of a still-real Soviet threat. This could happen most overtly through any premature NATO decision to draw down its forces unilaterally or otherwise neglect them. But it also could happen through more subtle mechanisms, not the least important being a series of arms control agreements that sow the seeds of distrust among NATO's nations.

Failure of this sort could drive Bonn to disengage from NATO and seek its security either through a bilateral deal with the Soviets or a defense buildup, possibly including nuclear armament. In either case, NATO would be fractured and West Germany cast adrift. The Soviets, no longer pressured by firm NATO resolve to channel their diplomacy in benign directions, would be given free reign to extend their influence in Europe. The West European nations, no longer bonded tightly together by NATO, would be less able to cooperate together; with West Germany pursuing its own course, old animosities easily might reappear. The United States would be left confronting a less stable Europe with a badly reduced capability to influence it. Although the consequences of these changes are hard to predict, they could hardly fail to inflict major damage on the United States and its allies.

The risk of inadvertently triggering NATO's autumn seems unlikely to inhibit the West from increasing its diplomatic contacts with the Soviet Union and pursuing measures outside the realm of security policy to improve relations. For example, in 1986 the United States, the United Kingdom, and West Germany all signed accords with the USSR to expand economic, scientific, technical, and educational contacts. In summer 1988, the European Community decided to recognize its Eastern bloc counterpart, thereby paving the way for increased East-West trade. In October 1988, the FRG and other Western European nations decided to extend large credit rights to the Soviet Union, thereby giving Moscow an infusion of capital for energizing its sluggish economy. Subject to restraints on sale of critical defense-related technologies, measures like these offer tangible benefits that outweigh the risks of helping the Soviet economy grow and clearly will be pursued.

Such measures can accomplish only so much. Because a grand settlement involving Soviet withdrawal behind its borders and enduring security for West Germany do not seem in the offing, negotiations aimed at stabilizing the military balance hold the key to winding down the Cold War to some. In this area, NATO faces the difficult task of deciding how much it is willing to give, and risk, in pursuit of a goal that, although worthy, is still problematic.

NATO's decisions in this area will be driven by the balance that it strikes between two propositions. Stated in their purest form (a form to which few observers would subscribe), these would lead the alliance in diametrically opposite directions. The first holds that the military confrontation is a major cause of East-West tensions and that NATO, because of its conservative planning, fails to understand its own contribution to this problem. Sensing that a historic but fleeting opportunity is at hand, it argues that NATO should not be narrowly preoccupied with its military security.

Perceiving the negotiatory process as a dialogue between two alliances with valid security interests, it contends that NATO should willingly accept some military risks as the price for agreement. It is inclined to table less demanding positions and to make concessions in

order to reach accords that will accelerate the momentum toward political rapprochement. It calculates that a set of negotiated accords, even if not all militarily benefiting NATO, would reduce Moscow's paranoia, help accelerate Gorbachev's reforms, and channel Soviet diplomacy into benign directions. The end result of this causal chain, it believes, would be a genuinely stable European order.

The other proposition starts from the premise that the East-West military confrontation is the result and not the cause of underlying political tensions and that arms control is a risky means, not an end in itself. It particularly is sensitive to the role that NATO's defenses play in deterring aggression and binding the alliance together. Hostile to risks, it believes that the tangible commodity of military security should not be sacrificed prematurely, especially in the pursuit of ephemeral momentum or political changes that might not evolve along desired lines.

Moreover, it holds, by frustrating Soviet ambitions in Europe, NATO's military deterrent is partly responsible for Gorbachev's recognition that the old order must change. Consequently, any slackening of NATO's military resolve would be doubly bad. In addition to unglueing NATO, it would weaken Gorbachev's hand and encourage the reactionary policies that the West wants extinguished.

For this reason, this proposition holds, NATO's stance in arms control talks should be driven by its primary defense goals and should not succumb to impatience, outside pressures, or secondary concerns. It argues that NATO should table militarily sound positions in every forum and adhere firmly to them. Above all, it concludes, the alliance should not be prepared to lower its defenses if the payoff is anything less than a genuine receding of the Soviet military threat.

Although official alliance policy has responded to both propositions, it comes closer to embracing the latter one than the former. A primary reason for this stance is that NATO is dealing here with far-reaching decisions whose consequences are manifested over many years. Mistakes cannot easily be remedied overnight, and they can be fatal. Most NATO officials consequently believe that a risk-averse outlook, while unglamorous, is best. Whether NATO will adhere to this

stance remains to be seen. Negotiating dynamics, the allure of Gorbachev's demarches, and West Europe's desires to relax tensions all could lead the alliance to soften its positions when accords are within striking range. But for the moment, the alliance is maintaining that it should enter into agreements only when its security is not compromised and, preferably, the military balance is tangibly improved.

IV. PROSPECTS FOR ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS

Whatever its merits, NATO's present position, in interaction with the USSR's similarly tough-minded approach, clouds the prospects for European arms control. As the critical reaction by some western experts to the INF Treaty showed, NATO's standard of undiminished security is not necessarily met by accords in which both sides reduce by equal amounts, nor even by asymmetric reductions favoring NATO. As long as residual Soviet forces still pose an offensive threat, the key but demanding measure is whether NATO's remaining forces are strong enough to support NATO's defensive strategy or at least that NATO's residual forces are not left relatively weaker than before.

Although the INF Treaty passed official inspection, it ran into outside trouble precisely because its ability to satisfy this criterion seemed ambiguous to some. Now that the INF Treaty has removed missiles that seemed to provide important military insurance, future negotiations are likely to be subjected to even more stringent applications of this standard. The net result can only be to further limit NATO's flexibility.

Of all the negotiations, START seems least likely to be stymied by this constraint. Although 50 percent cuts are envisioned, both sides would be left with over 1000 launchers and 6000 warheads. Whether this cut would leave Europe more secure than before is an open question. Both sides would still possess ample nuclear power to devastate Europe and each other. But this problem aside, residual U.S. forces would be adequate for meeting their obligations in NATO's military strategy, and the alliance would end up no worse off than before.

By contrast, NATO has less flexibility in its theater nuclear posture. A powerful constraint inhibiting NATO is that its nuclear forces are needed not only to balance similar Soviet systems, but also to offset the Warsaw Pact's perceived edge in conventional power. NATO's military strategy has long recognized that its conventional forces might be overwhelmed by the steamroller attack that the Soviets

could mount in Central Europe. It has turned to its nuclear forces to provide the missing ingredient needed to ensure conventional deterrence.

The INF Treaty will leave NATO only about 300-400 aircraft to maintain the deep strike mission. Although NATO's Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR) is allocated several U.S. nuclear submarines (SSBN) with about 500 warheads, even this combined posture will provide little surplus once the Pershings and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) are removed. The same situation applies to NATO's tactical nuclear forces, primarily composed of Lance missiles, air bombs, and tube artillery. In recent years, NATO has removed 2400 warheads from Europe. Although there is some flexibility for further paring of warhead levels in the context of modernization decisions to implement the Montebello agreement, a point will come where further cuts are not militarily wise.

As a result, NATO is chary about opening negotiations on its remaining theater systems. The Soviets, long-time advocates of "nuclear-free zones" in Europe, have advocated talks, but NATO has demurred. NATO also has reacted grudgingly to Soviet suggestions that air forces, which carry nuclear bombs, be included in the CST talks. Although domestic support has arisen in West Germany and elsewhere for a "third zero" option that would remove all tactical nuclear missiles from Central Europe, the alliance officially has shown little interest in that idea either.

Complete removal of NATO's nuclear forces, even if matched by the Soviets, would leave West Germany vulnerable to conventional aggression. It also would deny NATO the escalatory options its strategy requires. Moreover, because these forces derive their requirements from conventional scenarios, any sizable cut that violated the thresholds arising from them would itself raise serious questions about NATO's strategy.

This concern has led the alliance to stake out the position that before further cuts can be made in nuclear forces, steps must be taken to rectify the conventional balance. The CST talks soon to get underway will provide an opportunity, but agreement could prove difficult to reach, in part because NATO finds itself negotiating from an adverse position deriving from its vulnerable ground forces. The alliance is

compelled to table demands that, although legitimate, may be unnegotiable because they involve strongly asymmetrical reductions with much deeper cuts by the Warsaw Pact. NATO's peacetime posture in Central Europe totals only some 30 divisions. In a crisis it would build only to about 45 divisions after a month of U.S. and French reinforcement. Given NATO's current posture, even this level would be barely adequate to meet the minimum threshold for defense. The posture would reach greater adequacy only several months later, once all U.S. reinforcements had arrived. Any sizable cutback in NATO's early posture therefore would risk unhinging its strategy and could lead to disaster unless changes are also forced in Warsaw Pact strategy by much deeper cuts on their part.

The Warsaw Pact's posture begins with 60 divisions (54 after Gorbachev's drawdowns) and quickly builds to 90 divisions once forces from the western USSR are deployed. It is well-endowed in relation to its offensive strategy. It could absorb seemingly large cuts and still be capable of attacking. Moreover, withdrawn Soviet forces, if not entirely disbanded, would remain within a quick train ride of the forward areas. They could return more rapidly than withdrawn U.S. units. A poorly conceived agreement could exacerbate the already serious problem facing NATO because of its slower buildup rate.

This risk could be reduced if prepositioning of equipment for withdrawn U.S. units were allowed. But even so, NATO's need to establish a viable forward line within a few days of mobilization means that it is able to cut only a small part of its posture, unless the agreement reduced Warsaw Pact forces to the point where they fall below the threshold needed to attack. Only by reaching such an agreement could NATO be confident that the negotiations had produced a more stable balance in which the two sides could defend but not advance.

This requirement compels NATO to seek cuts in Warsaw Pact forces that not only are large, but also are highly asymmetric in NATO's favor. Warsaw Pact forces are so large that big reductions are needed to strip away their offensive potential, especially in the critical early stages. Illustratively, some 15-25 divisions (beyond Gorbachev's cuts) would have to be disbanded or at least rendered incapable of returning for

several weeks and months. Given NATO's limited ability to cut its own forces, this equates to an asymmetric reduction of 4-5:1.

A reduction in "offensive" weapons alone, rather than manpower and units, also would need to be large and asymmetrical. The Pact's roughly 29,000 tanks, 14,000 artillery pieces, and other weapons would have to be taken away to the point that the remaining forces and weapons could not attack. A minor thinning out would not accomplish this goal. Soviet forces would have to be configured largely as infantry units lacking their present mobility, armor, and fire support. Once again NATO would have limited room to cut its own inventory and would need to seek a common ceiling in weapons about at its present level. This would require the Soviets to remove thousands of their systems with little reciprocity by NATO.

An agreement could not be limited only to the forward areas. To ensure that withdrawn forces could not return quickly, it would have to reach into the USSR's western military districts and establish readiness constraints. Also at question would be the status of other reserves in the USSR. These forces, ostensibly allocated elsewhere, are flexible and could be used against NATO's Central Region or its flanks. Constraints covering them, however, could not be allowed to prevent U.S. reinforcement or compromise NATO's flanks. This is another area where asymmetry would be needed for a negotiated outcome to protect NATO's security.

In any agreement that reduces forces but safeguards NATO, the Soviets thus would have to give up a great deal while getting only a little in return. This requirement for asymmetry is one reason why the MBFR talks have been stalled since 1973. The Soviets, who value their forward presence, steadfastly have balked at NATO's demands. They have shown a willingness to consider asymmetry involving minor cuts. But thus far they have been unwilling to agree on reductions that truly would deprive them of an offensive option while leaving NATO's defenses intact.

Although the CST talks will test whether this stance has changed under Gorbachev, two unspoken yet profound problems that haunted MBFR will also very likely influence CST: the Soviet Union's hostility to

West Germany and its political freedom to use Eastern Europe as an invasion corridor to West Europe. Since World War II, Soviet strategy has stressed the importance of maintaining an offensive capability, including conventional forces, that could be employed to squelch a resurgent and hostile West Germany. Until the Soviets accept West Germany and NATO to the point of truly forgoing an offensive option, it is difficult to see them agreeing to a negotiated solution leaving them only a defensive force. A major change in Soviet political strategy thus will be necessary before its military strategy can change.

Moscow's ability to use Eastern Europe as an invasion corridor to the FRG, a necessary feature of its strategy, derives not only from its military presence there but also from its political control over the Eastern European regimes. This control would not diminish even if Soviet forces were partly withdrawn. As long as the Soviets retain this control, plus massive forces in the USSR, they would be able to knock down the negotiated barriers to attack overnight.

More is involved for NATO than simply pruning down Soviet forces. The Soviets claim that the treaties on Berlin and Germany signed nearly two decades ago signal Moscow's peaceful intent toward the FRG. However, NATO cannot afford to accept these assurances without agreement on the military corollaries to these treaties. If a diplomatic solution could be reached, leading to Eastern European regimes that could deny the Soviets ready access to Germany's borders, the military issues might become less important. Short of such a remedy, NATO is hard pressed to define an arms control agenda with less than major Soviet asymmetric cuts that could justify a decision to relax its conservative stance toward preserving an adequate defense posture. In its search for a stable balance, it is left with no practical alternative to tabling negotiating positions aimed at physically hamstringing the Soviets' ability to attack.

Although these two sensitive subjects are not being addressed directly on the negotiating agenda, they remain all-important issues in the background. Moscow's insistence on retaining offensive military insurance against West Germany and political control of the invasion corridors to it represents a policy of seeking absolute security for the

Soviet Union at the price of absolute insecurity for all of Europe. Until the Soviets relax this stance, the CST negotiations risk becoming an exercise in which root political causes are relegated to the sidelines while the two blocs haggle over widely different positions.

This prospect does not make CST useless. Quite apart from an accord, NATO needs these talks for the same purposes it required MBFR: to maintain its unity, to fend off domestic pressures for unilateral withdrawals, and to compel the Soviets to deal directly with it on security issues. Nor is agreement outside the realm of possibility, especially if Gorbachev's reforms truly signify a change in Soviet goals. The fact that the Soviets already have signalled a willingness to discuss asymmetry and offensive weapons is a good sign. Perhaps further steps will be forthcoming as the talks unfold.

Since they made similar gestures in MBFR, however, doubts remain that they will embrace the kind of profound asymmetry that NATO probably will demand. They are likely instead to enter the talks with the goal of pressuring NATO to water down its position. If their recent statements are any indication, they also will probably seek to expand the agenda beyond ground forces to include air and naval forces, areas where, they say, NATO enjoys offsetting advantages. Barring any NATO decision to relax its demands for asymmetry and to agree on a broader agenda, the CST talks already seem headed toward stalemate. Indeed, the large 23-nation forum for these talks, in this environment, could further cause the negotiations to bog down.

Given this undesirable prospect, NATO might profit by expanding its CST negotiating strategy. Because it must keep the dialogue directed toward major issues, it cannot back away from its emphasis on deep cuts, asymmetry, and stability as the ultimate outcome. By pursuing this course exclusively, however, NATO might doom CST to MBFR's fate, thereby giving the Soviets an excuse for not altering their threatening posture while weakening its own domestic support. To avoid this problem, NATO could establish a parallel CST track aimed at negotiating CSBMs beyond the Stockholm accords.

The Stockholm accords provide for advanced notification of exercises above division size and attendance by observers at them. The follow-on CSCE negotiations, involving the 35-nation forum, evidently will concentrate on further transparency measures. NATO could supplement this effort by seeking, in CST's 23-nation forum, agreement on actual intrusive measures ("constraints") that regulate force capabilities on both sides. CST, for example, could seek agreement on a host of related factors bearing on readiness: alert procedures, manning levels, training patterns, deployment zones, and stockage levels. For example, rearward deployment of Soviet bridging equipment and ammunition stocks would help reduce the risk of surprise attack in Europe.

Measures along these lines could not physically prevent the Soviets from invading, but they would help give NATO greater warning by making Soviet preparations more time consuming and less ambiguous. NATO depends heavily on warning, so such measures could increase stability. In addition, they would be negotiable. They coincide neatly with the steps that, Moscow maintains, it already intends to implement to reorient its posture to a defensive strategy. Indeed, pursuit of these measures would put useful pressure on the Soviets to make these changes.

Negotiations on CSBM measures and constraints in the CST forum would have to be coordinated carefully with parallel talks going on in the CSCE, post-Stockholm forum. Inclusion of them in CST would not derail, as some fear, NATO's emphasis on deep cuts. If anything, it might establish a better negotiating environment by providing small steps along the way to big things. It also would take pressure off NATO to compromise its position on asymmetric reductions.

But even with this help, the logjam on deep asymmetry cannot be broken by technical negotiations, regardless of how complex and imaginative they become. Gorbachev, of course, could break it if he is willing to pursue a truly strategic settlement in Europe whereby the Soviets would concede to a permanent retrenchment of their military presence and political control in East Europe. In exchange, they would receive enduringly stable relations with the West and the technical cooperation needed to modernize their economy. Such a settlement could

plausibly produce a large conventional drawdown accompanied by an equivalent nuclear reduction. But whether Gorbachev will be willing to pursue this giant step, like so much else that runs contrary to the Cold War's long history, remains to be seen.

V. PRIORITIES FOR NATO'S DEFENSE POLICY

Until arms control negotiations eliminate the Soviet threat, NATO will need to turn to its own defense policy to protect its security. In this area, the United States will need to project an image of constancy, steadiness, and balance to counteract any perception of erratic, unreliable American behavior that might yet linger in West Europe as a result of the misunderstandings that arose earlier in the 1980s. Within this framework, the United States and NATO will confront the decision of establishing their priorities in Europe. Based on present trends, the policy developed here would call on the United States and NATO to emphasize the following three priorities in the next few years:

1. Reaffirmation of a firm alliance consensus behind NATO's present military strategy of "flexibility in response" (MC 14/3).
2. Modernization of NATO's theater nuclear forces, but in ways that reduce the political costs to acceptable levels.
3. Improvement of NATO's conventional forces through enhanced coalition planning to keep the budgetary costs to feasible levels.

A strategy accord is fundamental to NATO's unity, especially to keep the allies confident of the constancy of the U.S. commitment. In its absence, damaging cleavages are likely to erupt that could quickly spread to other areas, including conventional planning. If this were to happen in the years ahead, NATO could find itself coming unglued just when unity is most needed.

The goal of military strategy is broader than legitimizing operational concepts, or providing a rationale for a new weapon system, or charting any single nation's course. In an alliance, strategy's central purpose is to determine how military force can best be used to defend the interests of all its members. In particular, alliance

strategy must meet the needs of both the United States and the West Europeans. Any strategy that serves the interests of only one side of the Atlantic would damage the alliance's unity and thereby undercut one of its most important missions.

Also, NATO's military strategy must take cognizance of the multiple objectives that all its members pursue, although sometimes in different degrees. NATO's primary objective is deterrence by means of the direct coupling of U.S. nuclear forces to Europe's defenses. But other important goals include the ability to conduct combat operations flexibly should war occur, control of escalation, crisis stability, arms control, and overall political stability. To encompass all these goals, alliance strategy must be multifaceted and well-balanced. Any strategy that emphasizes some goals to the exclusion of others would violate this principle.

Similarly, the price of a proper strategy invariably will be an internal complexity and sophistication that unfortunately appears to many observers as a hodgepodge of contradictions. Internal strength is more important, however, than a neat external appearance. Any strategy that purchases public appeal or satisfies public emotions by oversimplifying the complex realities facing NATO would do the alliance a serious disservice.

All these things considered, the United States and NATO would be best-advised to turn aside calls for change by reaffirming the present weatherbeaten but durable strategy of flexible response (MC 14/3). This strategy calls for a three-tiered defense doctrine of direct defense, graduated response, and general nuclear response. Ever since its adoption in 1967 critics have attacked it as being an unholy patchwork of political compromises, or because it allegedly fails to fully support individual goals. But when the multiplicity of alliance interests and objectives is taken into account, it is more substantive than commonly believed. Its durability over the past 20 years also suggests that it is adaptable. Although never regarded as perfect, it has not yet proven unacceptable on either side of the Atlantic. It thus seems to pass the twin tests of coherence and consensus not only minimally but impressively.

Moreover, MC 14/3, like democracy, is dissatisfying until all the alternatives are examined. For example, the idea of substantially reducing reliance on nuclear weapons by adopting the "no first use" doctrine is emotionally appealing given the appalling destruction of nuclear war. But this concept, in its extreme version, is infeasible because of the irreversible reliance that West Germany and other nations place on extended nuclear deterrence. Any move in this direction might seem to lower the risk of escalation, but it would eventually fracture NATO and trigger nuclear proliferation. The result would be a less stable situation.

Similarly, the alliance is unable to increase its reliance on nuclear weapons beyond the limits set by MC 14/3, even though this step might permit a politically attractive reduction in defense spending, because conventional strength is needed now more than ever to achieve deterrence and other important goals. In its absence, NATO would be compelled to risk nuclear escalation immediately in the face of nonnuclear aggression, a step that the Soviets, in a crisis, might dismiss as a bluff. The alliance could rely more heavily on nuclear weapons only if it could establish the kind of total, exploitable superiority over the Soviets that it enjoyed many years ago. But any effort in this direction, which would have to be made by the United States, also would fracture the alliance because of its implausibility and its destabilizing effect. Moreover, the Soviets would quickly checkmate it. The result, again, would be a more dangerous security system.

If the United States and its allies are led by these concerns to reaffirm MC 14/3, they should do so in a convincing manner. Since so many critics believe that the strategy is a watered-down compromise of competing transatlantic positions, a half-hearted endorsement would appear as reluctant acquiescence. This failure could leave every future weapon choice vulnerable to fractious debate on strategy. Accordingly, the alliance needs to signal, to itself and the Soviets, that MC 14/3's renewal is a positive step.

As part of reaffirming a strategy accord, NATO also will need to forge broad, conceptual agreement on its nuclear force needs. Its future requirements would need to reflect both the Soviet military buildup over the past two decades and the progress that negotiations have made in reducing it. MC 14/3 calls for a triad posture capable of implementing its three doctrinal concepts. This includes conventional forces to conduct a forward defense, tactical and theater nuclear systems that primarily would strike Warsaw Pact forces arrayed against Western Europe, and strategic systems for attacking the Soviet homeland. The nuclear forces therefore are required to be survivable, flexible, and able to provide the options needed to escalate in a controlled way. They need to be capable of striking several types of military and industrial targets that together constitute a large system.

Although these requirements are somewhat flexible as a function of the specific Soviet threat, they dictate a large and diverse posture. The key objective here is that the forces remain adequate both to provide extended deterrence and to execute NATO's strategy flexibly. As long as they meet this standard, questions over their size, their composition, and the effect of arms control cuts are less likely to damage NATO's unity.

Whether NATO's strategy requires a defensive SDI system is an issue that can be settled only by further analysis. An SDI deployment should be an outgrowth of NATO's strategy rather than a separate U.S. endeavor. Ideally it should be aimed not only at protecting the United States, but also at strengthening extended deterrence and stabilizing the strategic balance. Some SDI concepts might meet this standard, others might not. The exact nature, timing, and arms control effect of SDI thus matter a great deal. A properly designed SDI system might strengthen NATO's security on both sides of the Atlantic. But any system that serves only American interests or risks destabilizing the balance would badly strain alliance unity. It would thereby damage the central political goal of U.S. military strategy.

Regardless of what force mix it selects, NATO needs an early accord on nuclear strategy and posture to help avert a bitter debate that could easily erupt in coming years over modernizing its nuclear forces in Europe. The INF Treaty has left NATO in the position of having to decide how its remaining forces should be improved to compensate for the departure of the Pershings and GLCMs. In October 1988, the NATO defense ministers formally decided to proceed with a substantial modernization program but did not specify its exact nature or timing. Several options are available to NATO, including a Lance replacement, a longer range version of Lance, more F-111 bombers, cruise missiles at sea, and new tactical warheads and missiles. For a combination of important military and political reasons, the alliance needs to pursue one or more of these options, but it cannot afford to allow the process of nuclear modernization, which stresses Europe's political nerves, to divert its attention from other pressing matters, especially if that involves neglecting nonnuclear defense priorities.

The United States has emphasized nuclear modernization in past years, the Pershing/GLCM missiles being the best example. Nuclear modernization generally poses low budgetary costs, can be accomplished largely under U.S. control, and is a highly visible, quick way to demonstrate U.S. resolve. Beyond meeting specific military requirements, it has reassured the NATO allies about the U.S. commitment to extended deterrence. It particularly has been aimed at calming West German fears.

The present interest in a new wave of modernization stems partly from this political calculus. The INF Treaty is removing missiles that once were labeled as being essential to "coupling" U.S. nuclear forces to Europe. Although modernization would derive partly from the need to offset obsolescence (e.g. Lance), a related purpose would be to politically mollify the FRG government on this score by symbolically bolstering the residual posture, especially its long-range strike capability. West Germans would be left convinced that NATO's military strategy and the FRG's security are still intact. The net political effect would be to keep West Germany anchored in NATO, rather than allowing it to drift away as some fear might otherwise happen.

Although the basis of this calculation is understandable, in recent years modernization programs have not been cost free. Although budgetarily inexpensive, Pershing and GLCM triggered intense opposition among European liberals and leftists. As a result, the United States and several allied governments, including the FRG, were compelled to fight tough political battles to secure support from European parliaments. These battles consumed a great deal of time, energy, and effort, and left scarcely any political capital for other NATO projects. Hence, NATO gained from Pershing II and GLCM, but in other ways it indirectly lost.

This problem was experienced, to some degree, as early as the Carter administration. Immediately after it endorsed Pershing/GLCM in 1978, its conventional "Long Term Defense Plan" (LTDP) lost some of its steam. This slackening in conventional planning accelerated during the Reagan administration, which became entangled in the Pershing/GLCM deployment battle and initially was unable to devote much energy to the "Conventional Defense Improvement" (CDI) plan that it helped sponsor in 1984. Both administrations originally placed high priority on achieving a better conventional balance but left office with their goals not fully realized. The Pershing/GLCM debate was not fully responsible for their lack of greater success, but it certainly played a contributing role.

A follow-on modernization effort is likely to encounter similar troubles. Strong opposition by the political left in Germany and elsewhere is almost certain to erupt and drag the United States into a frustrating and costly debate. The end result may be a successful nuclear program, but the cost could be anemic conventional measures. Beyond this, the price of European public support for nuclear modernization might be NATO entrance into a negotiation aimed at eliminating short-range nuclear missiles in Europe. If the INF experience is any indicator, in these negotiations NATO might find itself maneuvered into further deep cuts: a "triple zero" that, while politically popular in some parts of West Germany and elsewhere, could seriously erode NATO's military strategy.

Even high costs and risks would be acceptable if the benefits of nuclear modernization were certain to be large and enduring. However, that is not necessarily the case. Nuclear measures could wind up functioning primarily as a palliative and have only temporary effects, especially to the extent that such measures serve political purposes and are not integral to satisfying NATO's enduring military requirements. Once their novelty wears off, their political benefits might well diminish.

No nuclear weapon system, regardless of its alleged coupling effects, can fully satisfy European concerns about the reliability of the United States. Although NATO still relies heavily on the threat of nuclear escalation to deter a conventional invasion, this threat is not fully credible. This difficulty cannot be resolved by measures to enhance NATO's theater nuclear posture that serve only to provide the military means to escalate, but cannot absolutely guarantee the intent.

The proper corrective action is for NATO to improve its conventional posture and thereby to transfer the onus of nuclear escalation onto the Soviets' shoulders, where it belongs. Once this goal is achieved, the political need for controversial new nuclear weapon systems as devices to preserve NATO's unity will recede somewhat. NATO then would be better able to address its nuclear decisions on the basis of its military requirements alone.

The political costs, transient benefits, and risks of nuclear measures all suggest that NATO should not plow headlong into pursuing them, or cast all other consideration aside. Instead, NATO should review the situation and its options carefully and should pursue only measures that truly make sense in a strategic, lasting way. Consistent with meeting NATO's military requirements, the alliance might strive for a package of measures that is as politically unprovocative as possible. This might help NATO to avoid not only a bruising and distracting internal fight but also a premature and risky negotiation on triple zero. If steps are necessary to satisfy allied goals for progress on reducing tactical nuclear forces in Europe, they might be undertaken by NATO unilaterally. For example, as the defense ministers noted, NATO could trim its artillery and other warhead stockpiles somewhat.

In any event, the United States and NATO cannot afford to unduly sacrifice their conventional defense goals to other priorities any longer. As Prime Minister Thatcher has said, NATO's conventional deficiency is a core problem. It weakens deterrence and creates incentives for the Soviets to seek military dominance in Europe. It is a primary cause for strains in NATO's unity, and it is a reason why the United States and West Europe often doubt each other. It compels NATO to rely greatly on nuclear forces and inhibits the partial shift toward conventional deterrence that its strategy has demanded for two decades and its situation now requires. It is a potential trigger for a crisis and leaves West Europe exposed to an early, explosive nuclear escalation should war occur. Also, it inhibits NATO's flexibility in both nuclear and conventional arms control talks,.

For all these reasons, it is a singularly important barrier to NATO's ability to preserve its security and to end the Cold War on favorable terms. Until it is resolved, NATO will not be fully secure regardless of the steps it takes to improve its nuclear forces. Accordingly, the United States and NATO should resist the temptation to become overly preoccupied with other matters by devoting an appropriate share of their energy and political capital to this problem.

If NATO is to correct its problems in this area, it will have to agree on more than ideas, concepts, and paper studies. It will need to make a firm commitment to concrete programs and apply its resources to implementing them. The United States has favored this idea for two decades, so the primary impediment has been allied reluctance, but this situation may be changing. To be sure, the allies are not prepared to abandon nuclear deterrence. Most remain ambivalent, on strategy grounds, to the idea of building a conventional posture capable of sustaining a long war. All also face fiscal constraints. But judging from official statements from London, Bonn, and other capitals, many are now coming to support MC 14/3's goal of building a posture that could defend forward at least in the early weeks.

The posture minimally envisioned by MC 14/3 falls short of what many U.S. strategists would prefer and certainly would not be impregnable. But by confidently defending for several weeks longer than the 7-10 days that SACEUR now estimates is possible, it would offer many strategic benefits. Because a posture of this sort would not permit NATO to abandon its reliance on nuclear escalation, it could not be construed as paving the way for the decoupling of U.S. nuclear forces from Europe. It would enhance deterrence by signalling NATO's resolve to the Soviets and by making victory unlikely in the only stage of war that can be forecast with any confidence: the initial period of operational maneuver.

NATO would thus have options for defending itself short of risking nuclear destruction. Such a posture would make NATO's threat of escalation more credible by ensuring that its leaders would be given the time and clarity needed to make the difficult decision to escalate, which is a major goal of MC 14/3. A conventional buildup to satisfy MC 14/3's demands therefore would strengthen not only the "initial defense" portion of the strategy, but would render NATO better able to execute the entire strategy.

Previous initiatives pursued the goal of building better conventional defenses: McNamara's plans in the 1960s, AD-70 in the Nixon years, the Schlesinger efforts of the Ford era, the LTDP of the Carter period, and the CDI plan of the Reagan years. The failure of all these initiatives to achieve their goals is a sober reminder of the difficulties of this enterprise. Still, all these initiatives were partly successful. The U.S. and allied improvement measures executed over the past years, although painfully slow, have had an important cumulative effect. They have placed NATO today within striking range of a posture adequate for MC 14/3. To illustrate this point, in the early 1950s NATO was capable of fielding only about ten understrength divisions in Central Europe. Today it is capable of deploying about 45 well-armed divisions on D-Day. This posture is not ideal, but it is close to the minimum requirement for a forward defense: NATO's Force Goals historically have called for 49-60 divisions.

As an illustration of the manageable distance yet to be covered, SACEUR has said that qualitative improvements to the existing force, rather than a major expansion, could accomplish this goal. NATO's official Force Goals call for measures costing about 10 percent more than now planned. Outside experts commonly have cited programs costing roughly 5-10 percent more. Also, new measures can be funded, to some degree, by economizing elsewhere. Hence, fiscal constraints, while inhibiting major progress quickly, are not prohibitive to a long-term effort. A conventional buildup probably could be achieved without a massive infusion of new resources over a ten-year period. Hence the agenda calls for a continuation of the slow, steady progress that NATO has been making for the past three decades: an effort that the alliance has shown itself politically capable of sustaining.

VI. COALITION PLANNING AND TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

To achieve the ambitious conventional and nuclear force improvement agenda that lies ahead, all members of the alliance must play a cooperative role. It is not attainable if only a few nations participate. Beyond this, the alliance as a whole will need to manage its combined efforts effectively. It will need to establish firm priorities, design innovative programs, and coordinate the efforts of all members. It also will need to cut costs by pruning unessential programs, reducing redundancy in logistics and elsewhere, achieving greater armaments cooperation, and developing a more efficient division of labor.

NATO thus far has not done an adequate job of managing this way. As an illustration, the CDI is addressing nine different "high priority" areas, too many to concentrate NATO's efforts. At the same time, CDI is doing little to build larger ground reserves, a deficiency that it regards as critical. Although this pattern raises questions about CDI's specifics, parallel examples from the LTDP and other efforts also could illustrate the basic point: NATO will need to act as a true coalition and will need to apply its scarce resources with great care.

A coalition response can be mounted only if Washington leads the way. The reason is alliance dynamics. Because the United States is NATO's dominant partner, the allies tend to follow its example. In the past, they generally have accelerated their efforts and cooperated closely only when Washington overtly committed itself to improving NATO's defenses. When U.S. leadership slackened, the allies normally backed off and ceased working together. The same pattern is likely to prevail in the future.

The United States cannot hope to lead NATO if it overplays its hand by demanding ambitious efforts from the allies far beyond what their domestic consensus is willing to support. Excessive American pressures would probably backfire. By the same token, the United States cannot effectively lead NATO if it succumbs to its own domestic pressures to

withdraw large numbers of its forces from Europe. Although the allies are capable of doing more than they do now, they lack the resources and the domestic support for the size of defense budgets needed to offset a large U.S. withdrawal and go beyond to improve NATO's posture. Also, despite their progress in economic integration as embodied in the decision to establish free markets by 1992, they have not yet achieved the political unity required to cooperate on defense matters in the absence of American leadership. Given this, a large U.S. drawdown inevitably would be accompanied by a parallel allied downturn, and thereby would produce the opposite of a buildup: a two-fold reduction in NATO's posture that would undercut MC 14/3 and alliance unity.

Thus, the United States cannot hope to accomplish in the next decade both of two key strategic goals in Europe: a viable conventional defense and the transfer of greater responsibility to the allies. It will need to make a clear choice between the two. Its vital interests suggest that it should pursue the first goal now and the second later. Perhaps early in the next century the United States will be able to leave Europe at least partially with confidence that the allies will be able to preserve stability.

This is not to imply that the current U.S. military presence in Europe is sacrosanct. It has grown by 30,000 soldiers in the 1980s, and if necessary might be trimmed by this amount to allow for efficient use of DoD manpower. A minor trimming also might help prod the allies by warning them that the U.S. presence is conditional upon their sharing the NATO defense burden. The threat of a major withdrawal, however, will need to be discarded from the policy agenda if a conventional buildup is to be a strategic goal. An inappropriate leadership tool, it is an alternative that should be pursued only if the allies fail to meet their obligations to such a degree that U.S. interests are sacrificed. Despite its limitations, allied performance far exceeds this standard.

The best way for the United States to stimulate a NATO buildup is the opposite course: to design programs that improve, rather than scale back, the U.S. contribution to NATO. Budget constraints, global requirements, and burden sharing concerns will prevent major increases in U.S. force commitments. But within these limits, steps could be

taken, at low cost, to improve U.S. forces even as manpower is trimmed. For example, the U.S. reinforcement capability could be strengthened by increasing the readiness of reserve component divisions. Such measures would directly help remedy NATO's force deficiencies and would pressure the allies to follow suit.

The allies are under little compulsion to respond when the United States is merely urging them onward while itself remaining inactive. But U.S. improvement measures help establish Washington's credibility in NATO headquarters and a favorable climate of opinion across Europe. As a result, even reluctant allies are hard pressed not to reciprocate. Also, allied defense officials often use the U.S. example as an argument to help persuade their own governments to fulfill their force commitments. Thus, U.S. improvement measures can exert influence that extends beyond formal governmental relations and reaches deeply into allied decisionmaking. They can help create a powerful political momentum across Western Europe in the direction that Washington is leading the alliance.

To capitalize on this momentum, NATO might need to conduct an intensified information effort across Western Europe aimed at building support for stronger conventional efforts. In parallel fashion, Washington might also need to conduct a better information effort in the United States aimed at reducing public disenchantment with NATO. This effort would need to focus squarely on the troublesome burden-sharing issue. When all factors are taken into account, only a few allies fail to meet reasonable burden sharing standards by a large margin. Many, including the United Kingdom, France, and the FRG, are bearing a larger share of the burden than is commonly realized. Neither the Congress nor the American public has yet fully internalized this message.

Washington also could make more vigorous use of cooperative programs to help the allies improve NATO's forces. In past years, it successfully pursued such combined measures as Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), Host Nation Support (HNS), and integrated air defenses. As an example of how it might do more, it could draw on the U.S. Army's war reserves to sell to West Germany, at low cost, enough tanks, artillery tubes, and Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) to

mechanize more of the Territorial Army's reserve brigades. Until recently, the FRG planned to equip many of these units with old but serviceable weapons passed down by the active Army as it receives new models. But this plan was scaled back in an austerity program adopted by Bonn in spring 1988. An imaginative U.S. assistance effort could help revive this important plan.

The United States could help facilitate a stronger coalition response in many other areas. American purchase of allied weapons would help establish a better two-way street and aid armaments cooperation. Similarly, the United States could encourage the pooling of ammunition stocks and other measures to create better multinational logistics systems, a step badly needed to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

As a final ingredient, the United States also would need to establish an improved management system for coordinating NATO's plans and programs. The LTDP set up committees in Washington and Brussels to monitor NATO's progress in ten different areas. While performing well, it was criticized for being overly intrusive and bypassing NATO's established planning mechanisms at SHAPE and NATO Headquarters. The CDI, by contrast, works directly through NATO's system and is less offensive to allied sensitivities. However, it does not provide the United States comparably strong levers for influencing NATO's programs. The United States might examine options for a revised management system that strikes a balance between these two models.

In any event, the combination of unilateral improvement measures, an information effort at home and abroad, cooperative measures, and an effective management system provide the United States the tools it needs to lead NATO. To use them effectively, Washington must make a political commitment to achieving a better NATO conventional posture. Provided it does so, its prospects would be good for rectifying this long-standing deficiency in NATO's defenses.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Dickens wrote that the late eighteenth century was an age of both wisdom and incredulity. It remains to be seen whether incredulity will be a proper emotion for Europe in the last decade of this century, but there can be little doubt that the years ahead will demand great wisdom from NATO. Wisdom was once measured by degree of resolve; now it is defined in terms of a more complex policy calculus, one that responds effectively to the complicated situation emerging in Europe.

In this context, NATO, having only recently emerged from a stressful era in which its unity was shaken, now finds itself facing the formidable challenge of acting coherently to shape Europe's destiny, rather than being victimized by it. The situation today demands that it both protect its security and simultaneously try to wind down the Cold War. It can best pursue this tough agenda by adopting a discerning view of the Soviets, a finely honed political strategy, realistic expectations for arms control talks, and sound defense priorities. Stated in more colloquial terms, NATO should endeavor to keep its eyes open, its mind focused, and its powder dry.

The U.S. policy developed here calls for continued American involvement, of a constructive sort, in NATO and European security affairs. Rather than advocating U.S. disengagement and the emergence of an independent West European pillar, its goal is to preserve close transatlantic relations and to maintain a militarily strong deterrent. This policy also calls on the United States and NATO to engage Gorbachev in truly constructive ways. Its aim here is both to stabilize the still dangerous security situation in Europe and to achieve better relations with the East on terms genuinely favorable to the West. Its approach to Moscow is premised on the assumption that NATO can hope to deal effectively with the Soviets only from a position of unity and strength. Hence this policy would enable NATO's defense preparations and negotiatory efforts to work together, rather than at cross-purposes.

The specific measures outlined here would enable NATO to preserve its cohesion and security by reaffirming accord on nuclear strategy, bolstering its theater nuclear forces at acceptable political cost, and improving its conventional defenses in affordable ways. Within this framework, these measures would allow NATO initially to pursue: accommodation with the Soviets through a START agreement; more CSBMs; actual constraints to help stabilize the conventional balance; increased trade; and efforts to solve problems elsewhere around the globe. If these steps prove successful and if the Soviets are willing to negotiate on terms that respect the West's interests, more ambitious accords would be possible. Gorbachev thus would be given ample opportunity to show that there is more to his rhetoric than just talk.

A balanced policy along these lines, to be sure, would require both discriminating judgment and firm commitment. Consequently, it would be difficult to implement. But by carrying it out, the United States and its allies would place themselves in a strong position to prevent NATO's autumn while responding openly to whatever good comes out of Moscow's spring. Thus they would do everything possible to ensure that the years ahead become the best, not the worst, of times.

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